2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

are kept by one or two men in most villages and housed in elaborate pigeon houses built with considerable trouble and protected with magic rites. But they are hardly ever eaten because 'People want to keep many pigeons, so they are afraid to waste the seed' (i.e. to reduce the stock). They like to see the birds flying about the village. They are things kept as a sign of rank. They just flutter and flutter about. They show the rank of the owner of the pigeon house.'[1] A common saying is 'The domestic animals of rich people cause admiration like pigeons'[2] i.e. they wander here and there and give the effect of countless numbers.

Goats and sheep also add to the reputation of their owner. The reluctance of the Bemba to kill and use them for ordinary purposes seems to be based on two different attitudes. On the one hand these people are as ignorant of methods of rearing stock as they are of poultry breeding. They lack completely any pastoral tradition, and the way in which goats, for instance, are treated, makes it little short of miraculous that any survive. The Bemba children do not herd them or look after them, and it is not uncommon for the owner to forget to let his goats out of their pen to feed. A man buys a goat or sheep as a sort of gesture, probably because he wants to acquire possessions, and he puts it in a shed, but he never seems to have any idea of building up a herd or relying economically on the sale of meat. The milk is never used. Added to this the killing of so large an animal as a goat or a sheep has a particular significance for the native, and this makes him unwilling to slaughter except for some special ceremonial reason. A goat is something approaching a human being, and is used nowadays as a substitute for human sacrifices. It can also serve as a compensation for some serious bodily injury, in which case it will probably change hands but not be killed. It is interesting that the Bemba, who have substituted money payments for many of their old religious dues, feel that a financial compensation would be unsuitable in such a case. 'It is right to give a goat because it is a man who has been hurt.' There is even some indication that the Bemba believe that to kill a domestic animal might bring dangerous consequences, just as the murder of a man would. In this tribe the belief that the spirit of a murdered man returns as a haunting

[1] *Fitekwa fya bukankala. Fyakupukapuka: filelanga bukankala bwa kwa cibinda ca nkunda.*

[2] *Fitekwa fya bakankala fyakukumukapo fye nge nkunde.*

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

ghost is very strong. In the case of a dangerous animal like a leopard or a lion special ceremonies are performed to prevent the return of its spirit. In the old days the killing of an ox, I was told, was accompanied by the words, 'Kampinda (a name for the High God) who gave us this beast, now go out of it. Go and settle in that one', pointing to another animal. I never heard this said, but to this day the Nkolemambwe, the hereditary official responsible for killing most of the beasts slaughtered at the Paramount chief's court in connexion with various rites, describes himself as being 'fierce' (*umukali*) on this account, and as doing specially dangerous work for the community requiring subsequent purification. I have heard a native say that it is bad to kill a dog because its spirit could return. 'White men are cruel the way they shoot sick dogs. It is better to tie them up in the bush and walk quickly away and let them die.' Children are sometimes afraid to kill a chicken. One said, 'It is a frightening thing to watch the breath flutter away'.[1] This attitude towards the killing of domestic animals is interesting in an agricultural people in which the ritual attitude towards cattle has not been formalized in different institutions and religious ceremonies as it has among the pastoral Bantu. It amounts to a reluctance to treat goats and sheep merely as stock to be bred and killed, combined in this case with a lack of scientific knowledge of how to do so.

Conclusion.

To summarize the Bemba views on food it must be admitted that they grade their different victuals according to fairly crude criteria, such as their lasting power, and ease of swallowing. Also habits developed in early infancy have made them used to experiencing particular sensations after eating, such as the feeling of fullness after a meal of *ubwali*. Hence other types of dishes have ceased to seem to them to be 'satisfying'. On the other hand, most of their prejudices appear to be extraordinarily sound in the particular environment in which they live. Their preference for millet flour as against cassava meal is an extremely sensible one as the chart of comparative values of finger millet, cassava, and maize given

[1] *Pakuloleshyo muntu apo umweo uleputuka cakutina.* This fear seems to be combined with a definite desire to watch pain inflicted. Most natives consider it the treat of treats to see a sacrificial animal killed, and I have always noticed that children swarm to watch a goat killed and rather enjoy a long-drawn-out death.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

as Shimwalule in the Chinsali district, the most secret and carefully guarded shrine in the territory. The bodies of lesser chiefs and royal princesses are buried in another grove about four miles from Citimukulu's village.[1]

Other sacred spots in Bemba territory are certain rocks, waterfalls, caves, or other unusual geographical features, named after legendary beings, who are described either as having lived at the spot in question, as having been found there by the immigrant Bemba, or as having performed some dramatic action there—jumping into a waterfall or drowning in a lake. It must be remembered that on this flat plateau, roughly 700 miles across, the sight of a mountain or rocky crag is rare and waterfalls of impressive size are few. Natives tend to speak of even low hills with interest, and most rocky summits or big caves are associated with the names of supernatural beings, who may be invoked there by the hereditary priest in charge (*shimiapepo*) at the order of the territorial chief. These sacred spots are not believed to have been sites of human habitation, nor by their very nature could most of them have been inhabited. The spirits associated with them are emphatically stated never to have been chiefs. They are *ngulu*—the name also used for a man or woman who believes himself or herself to be possessed by ancestral spirits. Were they people at all? 'Yes, but not people who go about like we do' (*Te muntu ua kuendaendafye*). That is to say they are legendary figures quite outside the tribal hierarchy of spirits, of whom little is remembered. Some natives say they were the first inhabitants of the country, but others deny that they were ever human beings at all. Pythons are said to inhabit some of these sites and to be worshipped there.

There are thus two types of spirit centre in the country—those of famous chiefs of the past, whose lineage can still be traced and whose descendants rule over the present territory. These cleared the bush here and there, built villages, and made the *mpanga* 'warm', ruled successfully over communities, died, and became protective influences over the inhabited district. The other spirits, *ngulu*, are also believed to hold power over a definite locality, but they never belonged to the lineage group of the Bemba and their names are not associated with habitable village sites but only with remarkable features of the landscape which in themselves arouse awe.

[1] The site of the village of the first ancestress of the Bemba, Bwalya Cabala.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

224 All these rites, as well as the common charms for luck in hunting, show the intense emotional interest of the Bemba in this traditional activity, and their alternating sense of hope and fear in the pursuit.

Most types of hunting are non-specialist, and according to the Bemba system of land tenure, any commoner can hunt anywhere in his chief's *icalo* provided he is prepared to give tribute,[1] and except in the case of elephants there are no individual prerogatives over game based on supernatural powers as is the case with the fishermen headmen described. The chief methods of hunting are as follows:

224 776 (*a*) *Net-hunting* (*ukusoa*). This is one of the few communal activities of the Bemba and all the male members of the village usually take part in it. It is reputed to be the oldest method of hunting, and the Bemba places its origin in legendary times. They describe a mythical figure—Kampinda—who was sent by the High God, Lesa, with his wife NaMukonda to teach the old people (*bakalamba*) how to make and use nets. Kampinda is not the spirit of a chief like the other *imipashi*. He just came first (*ukutangila*) to teach the people, just as Lucelenanga, another mythical hero, came to instruct the first doctors in the use of 'medicines'—a fact which seems to indicate that hunting and magic were reckoned the primary arts of this tribe. Small grass shrines are made outside many Bemba villages to Kampinda and his wife, and sometimes also to Mulenga, another hunting deity who is believed to wander up and down in the bush killing game for the people. Any animal found dead in the forest is said to have been struck by Mulenga. These three mythical characters are all spoken of with great affection and no fear. They are often called the *Bafundi*, or expert hunters.

224 787 [791] Net-hunting also provides the oldest and most common form of divination, a preliminary test which can be carried out without the help of a specialist witch-doctor. It is almost invariably used at the present day to decide after the death of a member of a family whether the disaster has been caused by an avenging spirit of the patrilineal or the matrilineal line. If the right words have been spoken at the beginning of the hunt the sex of the animal first killed reveals the secret at once—a female shows that the mother's side is responsible, a male the father's. The method of hunting

[1] Not often exacted nowadays, except in the case of natives who live at the capital (cf. pp. 254).

whom some were hereditary and most were appointed at the chief's will.

CHANGES IN POLITICAL ORGANIZATION INTRODUCED BY EUROPEAN CONTACT

In 1900 North-eastern Rhodesia came under the control of the British South Africa Company which had its headquarters at Kasama. While the chiefs were recognised, their functions were gradually taken over by the Administration and new courts of law administering a mixture of European and native law were set up under British magistrates. Chiefs were used largely as executive officials bereft of authority and privileges.

In 1924 Northern Rhodesia became a British Protectorate and in 1929 a modified form of "indirect rule" was introduced into the area by the Native Authority and the Native Courts Ordinance of 1929, subsequently modified in 1936. Chiefs, and in some instances chiefs' councils, were constituted Native Authorities, whereby they were given juridical powers over specific territories and encouraged to issue orders on matters such as village constitution, native movements, bush burning, *et al*. Native courts were also recognised and given jurisdiction over all cases except murder, witchcraft and issues implicating Europeans. The chiefs were given salaries - small in comparison with those received by other chiefs in Northern Rhodesia(1) and inadequate to their needs(2) - but which were, at any rate, indications of Government support. Native treasuries were set up in 1937.

Bemba chiefs had never lost their authority completely during the period of "direct rule", probably owing to the continuing strength of the people's belief in their ritual powers. They were no longer able to rely for their power on military success or the right of mutilating their subjects for offences, but the new measures gave them considerable government backing. But the poverty of the chiefs under modern conditions prevented the machinery of government from functioning. The old rulers were asked to carry out new executive duties but their councillors and messengers became increasingly unwilling and unable to serve them. Formerly they were fed by the chief while doing his work, but today the Government's discouragement, if not actual prohibition, of tribute labour, prevents the accumulation of food at the capital. It became necessary here as elsewhere to introduce some form of payment for court officials. The *bakabilo* were recognised as an advisory council in 1936 and it seems likely that judicial court officials will be paid in increasing numbers. Similar changes are probably taking place in other areas.

RELIGIOUS AND MAGICAL BELIEFS

(a) GODS OUTSIDE THE ANCESTRAL CULT.

In common with other central Bantu peoples, the Bemba and Bisa believe there is a high god, *Lesa*, who lives in the sky, controls thunder, sends

(1) £60 p.a., as compared with £1,700 for the Barotse chief. See Richards, 7, 1940, p.116.
(2) See Richards, 3, 1935.

776 children to men and is the original source of magic power. *Lesa* is not, however, the object of any cult and is never directly addressed by the Bemba.(1) There is some suggestion that *Lesa* is believed to act as a judge of the dead, but it is not clear how far this is a reflection of Christian teaching.

778 825 Shrines are put up in Bemba country to a hunting god, *Mulenga*, thought to be the spirit of a forgotten ancestor. There are also traces of serpent worship in two or three centres in Bemba country where sacrifices are made to pythons believed to live in caves or near waterfalls.

The Aushi believe in *Makumba*, a tribal god. While only chiefs and priests have seen him, he is generally thought to be small - about two feet in height - black and hard like stone. *Makumba* is very closely bound up with the idea of paramountcy among the Aushi but is clearly much more than mere "insignia of office"; he is worshipped and offerings are made to him; he is conceived both as a god and as a person, and is served by his own priests and priestesses. His association with the history of Aushi has already been mentioned. (See above p.8.)

(b) THE ANCESTRAL CULT

769 Some reference has been made in preceding sections to the ancestral spirits. Many ceremonies are connected with them and the part played by ancestral spirits in general and those of chiefs, and especially of the Paramount Chief, is the core of Bemba religion. These spirits (*Mupashi*, pl. *Imipashi*) are worshipped on all the chief occasions of the agricultural year, particularly at tree-çutting and harvest time, and also in times of tribal disaster or emergency. It may be remarked in passing that the ritual practices associated with these occasions were formerly very elaborate but are now being carried out with diminishing ceremonial and by fewer people, even though the beliefs behind the practices still seem to be dominant in the minds of the people.

769 778 The *Imipashi* are to be approached in certain well-defined ways among which are the calling of their names, prayers, and offerings of material objects. They may be invoked at the following places: firstly, the hut of every householder serves as a shrine, since his own ancestral spirits tend to linger there in the half-light of dawn and dusk to be invoked at the crises of life: birth, marriage, illness and death. In some areas food is placed for their appeasement but there is not, as among the Ila, a separate part of the hut set aside for them. The focal point of religious activity in the village is the headman's hut or a small shrine built outside it. Here the spirits of the headman's ancestors are invoked in all matters concerning the wider welfare of the village. In some areas shrines are put up to the spirits of the former owners of the land who are addressed by the village headman.(2)

(1) The position described by Smith and Dale in *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* is very similar.

(2) Among the Unga priests operate independently of the chiefs, the fusion of secular and spiritual authority is not so complete as it is among the Bemba. For details see Brelsford, 5, 1946, Chap.XI.

5:Slaski E-4 (no date) 1950 FQ5 Bemba FQ5
Luapula Peoples

pants from the contemplation of their loss he makes jokes at the expense of the dead man and behaves in a fashion which in other circumstances would be considered outrageous and would not be tolerated.

Kazembes considered themselves as potentially immortal; thus the death of a Kazembe was attributed to neglect of magical precautions against witchcraft.(1) According to Pinto, slaves and wives of a dead Kazembe were sacrificed and a ten-day period of authorized licence followed during which robberies were allowed.(2)

It was believed that the living and the dead could communicate. Life after death resembled that led while alive.(3)

RELIGIOUS AND MAGICAL BELIEFS AND RITUAL

The concept of the high-god Lesa is common to the Bemba-speaking peoples. *Lesa*, the creator, is regarded rather as a nature force than a personal deity and is not the object of an organised cult. He manifests himself in thunder, lightning, and the rainbow and can kill by lightning or epidemics, but generally interferes little.

The *ngulu*, nature spirits residing in animals, trees, stones, hills, caves, ponds, waterfalls, can bring good weather and crops and are prayed to in an emergency. This cult is of non-Lunda origin and has probably come from the Chishinga, Lungu and Bemba country. Most of the dwelling-places of these spirits are found on the escarpment hills and on the plateau. The *mfumu ya mipashi* (chiefs of spirits), which can enter and possess people making them dance, are local deities whose beneficient activity is confined to the village or district.

When the general well-being of the community was concerned the spirits of dead Kazembes, *masamos*, were consulted and presented with offerings of cassava, beer and goats. Kazembes were buried at a place north-east of the old capital with which it was connected by a broad pathway(4) still discernible. Each had a shrine which was tended by a guardian-priest, *mwine masamo*,(5) whose office was hereditary. These keepers of the royal graves sought the advice of the oracle when war was contemplated and invoked the assistance of the spirits.(6) The River Lualaba, in which Kazembe the founder of the dynasty rests, was held in veneration. Processions went there annually at harvesting time. It is said that Keleka was the first Kazembe who failed to lead the procession in person, and the famine and smallpox epidemic which later occurred were attributed to his negligence.(7) The Kazembe is said to have been the highest religious authority.(8)

Carved wooden figures representing dead ancestors (*nkisi*) were kept in special huts and received offerings of beer, cassava, flour, hemp and tobacco.(9) Kazembe had several such figures, some named after dead chiefs, which were carried before the army in battle.(10)

(1) Valdez, II, p.242.
(2) Burton, p.128.
(3) Valdez, op.cit., p.243.
(4) Valdez, II, p.231.
(5) Burton, p.103.
(6) Valdez, op.cit., p.248.
(7) Valdez, II, p.257.
(8) ibid., p.243.
(9) Livingstone, I, p.353.
(10) ibid.

9: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1935 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

feature. Punishment is only inflicted by the supernatural power when it is deserved. The religious dogma follows strictly the tribal morality and gives it its sanction. It stresses particularly that basic sentiment of Bemba society—the attitude of a man to authority in general and in particular to his chief. *Mipaʃi* are injured if not given proper respect, while the whole land suffers if the chief defaults. So also in the case of the avenging *ciwa*, it is the failure to honour and stand by your relations which is punished, the typical case always given being that of the old mother who dies of starvation and neglect. Here again the *ciwa* may not even return and haunt the living without the permission of Lesa, the High-God, and only a spirit suffering under a legitimate grievance is allowed to avenge. The curse by the name of a dead chief will only light on the real offender.

To sum up, according to Bemba dogma most misfortune is believed to be due to wrong-doing, and in particular transgression of the rules of respect to authority. The cause of the disaster can be ascertained by divination, itself a mechanism socially approved and carried out by a reputable character, the *ŋanga*. The remedy can be procured by the purchase of medicine, by the performance of a laborious rite, and perhaps, most important of all, by the public admission of guilt.

In this apparently logical and orderly system there is, according to theory, only one incalculable element—the sorcerer (*muloʃi*) who kills without rhyme or reason, for the sake of doing harm. The *baloʃi* are enemies of society and running counter to its laws. They actually start their careers of crime by committing some outrageous act, such as father-daughter incest, or the murder of a baby of their own clan. They have various mythical attributes. They can make themselves invisible; kill at a distance; send magic birds to steal food from their enemies; and of course perform secret rites and possess and sell evil medicines. Now it is obvious that such sorcerers are actually non-existent, though their mythical attributes are readily credited to unpopular people of dour or difficult temperaments, bad mixers in the American sense, bad sharers, or persons who seem to be winning unusual success at others' expense. I would not be bold enough to say that no rites of evil magic are performed in Bemba country, or that there do not exist here and there individuals who believe themselves to possess such powers. But it is the reflection of the *buloʃi* belief in